



# Migrant Magazine

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## Table of Contents

Camp Curiosity in Daviess County .....	2
Fall Academy updates.....	2
Interesting website .....	3
Ideas to use with OSY.....	3
Getting to Know Rona Comley .....	4

## Important Dates

November 14-16, 2011  
ID&R conference,  
Nashville, Tenn.

November 15-16, 2011  
Summer Learning  
Conference  
San Francisco, Calif.

April 29-May 2, 2012  
NASDME Conference  
Portland, Ore.

September 2012  
OSY Dissemination  
Event, Clearwater, Fla.



## Happy Birthday!

August 18  
Amy Edwards

September 2  
Phoebe Gras

September 15  
Andrea Carter

September 25  
Miguel Vieyra



## Dropout Rates Decline in Monroe Co. Schools

In a July 28, 2011, article in the *Glasgow Daily Times*, Gina Kinslow reported how Monroe County has decreased its dropout rates. She notes that there are three basic attributes that keep students in school: relationships between faculty, staff and students, credit recovery programs and a court system that works with the school to stop truancy. Monroe County has steadily decreased its dropout rate from 2.71 percent in the 2008-09 school year to 0.17 percent in 2009-10.

Dr. Michael Carter, chairman of the Monroe County Board of Education, attributes the school district's success to the credit recovery program offered to struggling students during the summer. In the past, summer school was seen as a chore, but

these students thoroughly enjoy it and stay longer to complete additional projects.

Superintendent Lewis D. Carter is pleased with the low dropout rate. The Monroe County court system also plays a big role in assuring students stay in school. District Court Judge Kristi Castillo said that she has several tools to give students incentives to abide by school rules and attend school, and she just enforces the rules for the kids.

Mike Gee, director of pupil personnel, said that the bond the students form with the faculty and staff also keeps them in school. He shared a story about a student who wanted to drop out because he had trouble speaking English and was afraid to give a speech in front of his class. This student went to the assis-

tant principal and told him he wanted to quit. That is when Gee was called.

Gee determined that student was in the migrant education program. When he called the program director, Cecilia Stephens, within 30 minutes the migrant worker, Tracey Travis, was talking in the hallway with the student and encouraging him not to drop out. They had a significant bond. Travis spoke with the teacher and principal about the student's language barrier. The teacher, principal and Travis collaborated to form an assessment for the student, providing him with confidence to want to stay in school. The relationship the student had with the director and migrant staff was significant enough that the child didn't drop out.

[More Information](#)

## Articles in the News: Missing Man Found Dead Along Road

As reported by WKYT-TV in Lexington, 31-year-old David Aquillar was found dead before 10 a.m. on September 6 near Bedford Road in Franklin County.

Aquillar was a migrant worker on a nearby tobacco farm. A few days before his death, he complained to fellow workers that he felt bad and was taken to the hospital.

Franklin County Sheriff Pat Melton said that Aquillar wasn't reported missing until September 6, and if police were notified immediately of his disappearance, the case could have turned out differently.

An autopsy on Aquillar will help determine what led to his death, but tobacco poisoning is suspected. This is a very common illness, especially among migrant

workers. Some symptoms to be aware of include headaches, dizziness and nausea.

Many migrant farm workers feel threatened by the police, but the police are there to serve everybody. If you know someone that has come in contact with tobacco poisoning, call poison control immediately.

[More Information](#)

## Fall Academy at a Glance



Amy Edwards and Sandra Wallace being held up in the air by Devin Wyman. Picture taken by Diana Kuta.

## Central Region Blitz in October

Every year, the state ID&R coordinator, Christina Benassi, will be conducting regional blitzes. The next blitz for 2011 will be in the Central Region. We will need recruiters who are willing to assist with the blitz during the week of October 24-28. If you are interested, please contact your regional coordinator or Christina Benassi.

The Central Region has chosen to focus its recruitment in Warren County and Casey County. The details about meeting place and other logistics are being worked out.

There are many reasons that a region may have a blitz. One reason may be to investigate the decrease in qualifying migrant families. This can be due to a number of factors, including lack of program, part-time recruiters, new recruiters and non-bilingual recruiters. Another reason for a blitz may be to investigate the area because little time has been focused on that county.

The blitz is designed to bring together new and experienced recruiters to work together to find leads, build a relationships

and investigate the problems that may have arisen in the county.

April Willis-Harper, the Central Regional coordinator, believes that this area has unidentified migrant families because there is a migrant preschool. She wants to investigate why the numbers have decreased.

We are building a list of leads to assist us during the blitz. If you are interested, please let Christina Benassi know, and she will see if you are needed for this project.

## Camp Curiosity in Daviess County

This past summer, Patrick Riley of Daviess County hosted an exciting summer camp for migrant students in grades K-9 called "Camp Curiosity." This camp used its 80 hours by giving students the opportunity to play soccer, hip-hop dance, play math board races and participate in reader's theatre. Groups of students were broken down into appropriate

grades and then presented a play.

There were three main goals during this summer camp: helping each student achieve reading fluency on grade level; helping students achieve math computation fluency on grade level; and having fun while accomplishing these goals. Students worked in small

groups to accomplish their reading and math goals. They also participated in art, health and science classes. They took a field trip to Chaney's Dairy Barn, where the students enjoyed a hay ride, learned about farm life and farm animals, and tasted some delicious homemade ice cream. At the end of the camp, the parents were invited for a family fun night.

## Fall Academy: Updates from Washington, D.C.

Roger Rosenthal spoke at the Migrant Fall Academy and mentioned several proposed changes for the Migrant Education Program (MEP). He supports preserving the MEP categorical grant program and not putting it into Title I. Rosenthal discussed taking out

the "intent" factor in eligibility. Children that move with a farm worker may qualify without asking what their intent for the move was. Also being proposed is taking out "economic necessity" and not asking parents about income.

Finally, Rosenthal wants to preserve the summer funding formula, allowing the funds to follow the children based on an average of the last three years.

All these ideas are in the proposal stages, and nothing is set in stone at this time.



Claude Christian and Bill Thompson at the Fall Academy with Keith Davis and Devin Wyman. Picture taken by Diana Kuta.

## Ideas to use with Out of School Youth

During the Fall Academy, Vermont's Migrant Education Program State Coordinator, Erin Shea, spoke about recruiting OSYs and how to serve them. OSY is the fastest growing MEP population. The OSY who are not in school have little or no access to federal and state resources, thus it is the responsibility of the advocates and recruiters to find these OSYs and serve them. Primarily, this population is here to work, speaks very limited English and is made up primarily of males from Mexico and Guatemala.

Shea shared a helpful idea about using a map. Sometimes, using a map and showing the OSY where they live and where other things are located is a great way to teach on your first visit. These maps are free if you contact your chamber of commerce. Ask the OSY if they know where they live on the map and other questions about the area. It is important that when recruiters and advocates give the OSY something (maps, dictionaries) that they explain how to use the items. Always

keep the OSY learning and interested.

Shea also suggested providing classes on items such as "how to leave a voice mail." Simple things like these can be very important.

Advocates can have a short ice breaker, ask the OSY to leave a voice mail, teach them, then provide them with a post-test. All this can be done in an hour-and-a-half evening class, and the OSY walk away with a valuable lesson.



Sandra Wallace from the Western Region provided pictures of OSYs at David Seay's tobacco farm using iPods on their break. Picture taken by David Seay.

## Calling All Advocates . . .

This summer and fall, several advocates have assisted with the development of the advocate handbook. Several advocates helped with this process. Special thanks to Bourbon County Migrant Director, Advocate/ Recruiter Teresa Blevins; Madison County Advocate/Recruiter Rona Comley; Powell County Migrant/ESL Program Coordinator and Special Education District Resource Debbi Rose; and Barren County Migrant Advocate/ELL Coordinator Sherry Stephens. They have done a fantastic job assisting ID&R Coordinator Christina Benassi with this project.

This handbook is up and ready on the migrant documents page on the KDE website. Please take a look at it, and if you have any questions, contact Christina Benassi.

Benassi will attend regional meetings and provide assistance with understanding the advocate handbook.

The point of the handbook is to provide guidance to new and experienced advocates with a list of helpful resources, terms, forms and other useful information. The handbook is designed in a user-friendly way with beneficial information.

The hope is that, by combining this valuable information into one book, it can provide valuable resources for advocates to use to ultimately provide successful services for our migrant families.

## Interesting website to report immigration data

Jorge Echegaray of the Florida Identification and Recruitment Office shared information about the interactive Children of Immigrants Data Tool [website](#). This site has been updated with 2008 and 2009 American Community Survey data.

The tool can generate customized graphs and charts for every state and the District of Columbia. Statistics on 26 indicators include citizenship and the immigrant status. (foreign vs. native-born) of children and their parents; children's race, ethnicity, and school enrollment; parents' education and English proficiency; and family composition, in-

come, work effort, homeownership and food stamp receipt. It provides numbers or percentages and can be very useful.

In 2009, 16.8 million children 17 years old or younger had at least one immigrant parent. That's a one-third increase from 2000's 13.3 million children and a twofold increase from 1990's 8.3 million young people.

## Special Thanks to Andrea Carter for her hard work!



Special thanks to Andrea Carter for being our migrant director and ID & R coordinator for the past three years. She is leaving her position to work with MSIX as part of its RE-ACTS committee. She will truly be missed. To contact her email [Andrea.carter@novelmg.com](mailto:Andrea.carter@novelmg.com)



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## Getting to Know Recruiter Rona Comley

Our spotlight person this month is Rona Comley. She is beginning her 28th year in education with the Madison County school district. Before becoming the migrant advocate and recruiter in Madison County 13 years ago, she taught elementary grades K-4. During that time, Comley worked for 12 summers in the migrant summer school program as a teacher. She taught adult migrant parents to read and work toward getting their GED.

The position and duties of a migrant advocate and recruiter cannot be explained in a few words, Comley says. But the experiences

and education that she has gained can be gratifying and rewarding, since every day is a new challenge. Like all advocates and recruiters, she wears many hats on any given day. Comley is a community resource provider, a school liaison, counselor, teacher and friend. This job has given her the opportunity to attend migrant conferences in various states, meet and work with other advocates and recruiters, and learn about different cultures.

She enjoys going to antique auctions, spending time with

family, especially her niece and nephews, and watching her daughter compete in horse shows. Comley's grandmother recently turned 92, and she cherishes the time she spends with her. Comley is also a member of the Tate's Creek Baptist Church in Richmond. She enjoys being a part of community activities and bringing awareness to the migrant workers' role in her community. Comley wishes everyone a school year filled with accomplishments.



Rona's Daughter  
Photo by  
Jennifer Zeller